

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2094

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 9946

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, PRFOR, PK, IN, BG

SUBJ: EXCHANGE OF BENGALLEES, NON-BENGALLEES AND POWS

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 9628

B. ISLAMABAD 9754

C. NEW DELHI 10046 (NOTAL)

D. NEW DELHI 12730 (NOTAL)

E. DACCA 4871 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: MUTUAL CHARGES OF BAD FAITH BY INDIA, BANGLADESH
AND PAKISTAN IN CARRYING OUT EXCHANGES PRESCRIBED BY
DELHI AGREEMENT HAVE THREATENED TO SLOW PROCESS WHICH SO
FAR HAS BEEN PROGRESSING RELATIVELY SMOOTHLY. UNHCR
PRINCE SADRUDDIN'S RECENT SOUTH ASIAN TRIP MAY HAVE
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REMOVED SOME OF THE ROADBLOCKS BY MISUNDER-
STANDINGS AND PROPENSITY OF EACH GOVERNMENT TO SUSPECT MOTIVES
OF OTHER. IF GOP CARRIES THROUGH ON PROMISES TO SPED UP
NON-BENGALLEE CLEARANCES AND MOVES AHEAD ON "HARDSHIP" CASES

AND BDG EXPEDITES NON-BENGALEE DEPARTURES, WAY MAY BE CLEARED FOR MORE RAPID POW REPATRIATION. THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE NUMBER OF FUTURE PROBLEMS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS, HOWEVER, WHICH WILL REQUIRE CONTINUING GOOD OFFICES OF ICRC, UNHCR AND OTHERS TO RESOLVE. END SUMMARY.

1. FROM ISLAMABAD VANTAGE POINT, THREE-WAY MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES AND DETAINEES APPEARS BE PROGRESSING ABOUT AS WELL AS COULD BE EXPECTED DESPITE VARIOUS TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES. DISAGREEMENT OVER NUMBERS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS OVER TECHNICAL ASPECTS DELHI AGREEMENT HAVE RESULTED IN RECRIMINATIONS WHICH HAVE EFFECTED PACE OF POPULATION TRANSFER. AS NOTED REF (A), GOP ASSERTS IT IS FULLY MEETING ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER DELHI AGREEMENT BY RETURNING ALL BENGALLEES WHO WISH EMIGRATE, GRANTING ENTRY PERMITS WITHOUT NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS TO NON-BENGALLEES WHO QUALIFY WITHIN FIRST THREE CATEGORIES, AND PREPARING TO TAKE APPLICATIONS FOR THE 25,000 ADDITIONAL HARDSHIP CASES. CONVINCED OF THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS, PAKS HAVE EXPRESSED RESENTMENT AT GOI INSISTENCE ON KEEPING RATE OF RETURN OF POWS WELL BELOW PHYSICAL CAPACITY. BHUTTO SEEMS TO HAVE ADJUSTED HIS THINKING TO THIS ELONGATED TIME-TABLE, HOWEVER, SINCE HE MENTIONED PUBLICLY DURING RECENT TOUR OF AZAD KASHMIR THAT HE FORESAW COMPLETION OF POW RETURN IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH 1974 (ISLAMABAD 9583). UNHCR PRINCE SADRUDDIN, WHO RECENTLY DISCUSSED THESE PROBLEMS IN DACCA DN ISLAMABAD (REF B), BELIEVES THAT BDG SLOWDOWN ON NON-BENGALEE DEPARTURES AND GOI SLOWDOWN ON POW REPATRIATION CAN BE REVERSED AS RESULT GOP UNDERTAKING TO SPEED UP NON-BENGALEE APPLICATION CLEARANCES AND GOP ASSURANCE THAT IT WOULD NOT CHARGE TO "HARDSHIP" QUOTA THOSE NON-BENGALLEES WHO FAILED QUALIFY UNDER FIRST THREE CATEGORIES AFTER ARRIVAL IN PAKISTAN UNDER BLANKET PROVISIONAL CLEARANCE.

2. CENTRAL TO PROBLEM OF TRYING TO DETERMINE WHO HAS DONE WHAT TO WHOM IS THE "NUMBERS GAME." EACH SIDE QUOTES FIGURES TO ARGUE ITS OWN CASE AND CAST BLAME ELSEWHERE. AT CONFIDENTIAL

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LEAST FOUR SETS OF FIGURES ARE INVOLVED: ESTIMATES OF THOSE COVERED UNDER DELHI AGREEMENT; NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED, NUMBER ENTRY PERMITS GRANTED, NUMBER ACTUAL ARRIVALS. THEY ARE ALL DIFFERENT YET OVERLAPPING.

3. THOSE TO BE EXCHANGED UNDER DELHI AGREEMENT INCLUDE ALL POWS AND CIVIL INTERNEES HELD BY INDIA--ABOUT 93,000 MINUS THE 195 EARMARKED FOR TRIAL; ALL BENGALLEES IN PAKISTAN--HIGHEST EARLY ESTIMATE BY ICRC 175,000 BUT NOW CALCULATED AT PERHAPS 126,000; ALL QUOTE PAKISTANIS UNQUOTE IN BANGLADESH (I.E., THOSE FALLING INTO THE THREE AGREED CATEGORIES) ESTIMATES OF WHOM HAVE VARIED FROM 27,000 TO ABOUT 50,000; AND QUOTE SIGNIFICANT NUMBER UNQUOTE (UNDER-

STOOD BY ALL PARTIES TO BE 25,000) NON-BENGALEE "HARDSHIP CASES" WHO QUOTE HAVE OPTED FOR REPATRIATION TO PAKISTAN UNQUOTE. TOTAL TO BE RELOCATED THUS COMES TO ROUGHLY 290,000. ACCORDING MFA DIRGEN FOR SOUTH ASIA, ABDUL SATTAR, CONSIDERABLE INITIAL MISUNDERSTANDING STEMMED FROM FACT THAT THE CATEGORIES OF NON-BENGALEES TO BE ACCEPTED BY PAKISTAN AND NUMBER OF HARDSHIP CASES TO BE ADMITTED WAS NOT MADE PUBLIC. AS RESULT, THOUSANDS OF INELIGIBLE NON-BENGALEES SUCH AS RAILWAY WORKERS AND OTHER FORMER EMPLOYEES OF EAST PAKISTAN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS FOR TRANSFER TO PAKISTAN. REJECTION OF THEIR APPLICATIONS LED TO UNFOUNDED BDG SUSPICIONS THAT GOP WAS ATTEMPTING EVADE ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER DELHI AGREEMENT.

4. LEAST DIFFICULT ASPECT OF EXCHANGES HAS BEEN MOVEMENT OF BENGALEES FROM PAKISTAN TO BANGLADESH. SINCE DELHI AGREEMENT, BDG HAS NOT BEEN REQUIRING ENTRY PERMITS OF BENGALEES ARRIVING FROM PAKISTAN IN UNHCR AIRLIFT. GOP INSISTS IT IS PREPARED PERMIT DEPARTURE OF ALL BENGALEES WHO WANT TO GO AND LHO REGISTER FOR EMIGRATION WITH ICRC. ACCORDING GOP SOURCES, THIS INCLUDES 60,000 FROM PRIVATE SECOR WHO HAVE APPLIED PLUS ANOTHER 5,000 OR SO EXPECTED; 51,000 MILITARY INCLUDING DEPENDENTS; 10,000 CIVIL SERVANTS INCLUDING DEPENDENTS, FOR TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 126,000. THIS FIGURE IS CONSIDERABLY BELOW EARLIER ESTIMATE, WITH DISCREPANCY EXPLAINED BY PAKS AS STEMMING FOR RECEIPT OF FEWER APPLICATIONS FROM PRIVATE SECTOR THAN EXPECTED. WHILE CONFIDENTIAL

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THERE ARE NO SIGNS ANY GOP DISIRE HOLD BACK ANY BENGALEES AGAINST THEIR WILL, THIS COULD BE SOURCE FUTURE MISUNDERSTANDING GIVEN DEEP-SEATED SUSPICION OF THREE PARTIES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 9946

5. REGISTRATION OF NON-BENGALEES FOR MIGRATION TO PAKISTAN HAS BEEN COMPLICATED AND INEFFICIENT ACCORDING ICRC REP IN ISLAMABAD (MARTIN) BECAUSE WHEN REGISTRATION BEGAN ICRC HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHO WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY GOP AND, AS NOTED ABOVE, EVEN AFTER DELHI AGREEMENT NON-BENGALEES WERE NOT INFORMED PUBLICLY OF CATEGORIES WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY GOP. MARTIN EXPLAINED THAT INITIAL 30,000 APPLICATIONS SENT TO GOP IN MAY 1973 HAD BEEN TAKEN BY ICRC BANGLADESH OVER PERIOD OF MANY MONTHS. BDG AT FIRST WANTED TO CONDUCT ITS OWN REGISTRATION BUT CHANGED ITS MIND AFTER DELHI AGREEMENT BECAUSE TASK WAS SO DIFFICULT. MARTIN SAID THAT WHEN BDG BEGAN COMPLAINING OF TIME REQUIRED TO CLEAR APPLICATIONS, GOP OFFERED TO GIVE BLANKET CLEARANCE TO APPLICANTS AND DETERMINE THEIR CATEGORY UPON ARRIVAL IN PAKISTAN, CHARGING THOSE WHO DID NOT QUALIFY UNDER CONFIDENTIAL

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FIRST THREE CATEGORIES TO "HARDSHIP" QUOTA. BDG DEMURRED, FEARING GOP WOULD ARBITRARILY REJECT QUALIFIED PERSONS IN ORDER TO FILL UP "HARDSHIP" CATEGORY, BUT LATER AGREED ON BLANKET CLEARANCE PROCEDURE IN ORDER TO AID NON-BENGALEE DEPARTURES. UNHCR PRINCE SADRUDDIN CONFIRMED (REF B) THAT BDG WORRIES IN THIS AREA LED IT TO SLOW UP DEPARTURES ON NON-BENGALEES. SATTAR HAS EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH GOP WAS TENTATIVELY USING "HARDSHIP" CATEGORY FOR PERSONS NOT QUALIFYING IN FIRST THREE (A DECISION GOP HAS SINCE REVERSED, ACCORDING TO SADRUDDIN) ACTUAL GOP INTENT WAS TO USE THIS CATEGORY FOR APPROXIMATELY 5,000 PRO-PAKISTANI POLITICAL ACTIVISTS (PEACE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, RAZAKARS AND SIMILAR VIGILANTES) AND THEIR DEPENDENTS WHOSE FUTURE IN BANGLADESH HAD BEEN RUINED BECAUSE THEIR OVERT SUPPORT OF PAKISTAN IN 1971.

6. GOP AND ICRC GIVE FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS FROM NON-BENGALEES RECEIVED BY GOP BY END OCTOBER: 84,000 TOTAL RECEIVED; 40,000 REJECTED IN FIRST THREE CATEGORIES; 23,000 GRANTED ENTRY PERMITS IN FIRST THREE CATEGORIES; 6,000 GRANTED PERMITS UNDER BLANKET CLEARANCE BUT FOUND NOT QUALIFIED UNDER FIRST THREE CATEGORIES; 15,000 UNDER

CONSIDERATION. AS INDICATED REF (A), GOP MOST RECENTLY HAS NOT BEEN SERIOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO VERIFY CLAIMS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT, FAMILY TIES HERE OR FORMER DOMICILE, BUT HAS BEEN TAKING STATEMENTS ON APPLICATIONS LARGELY AT FACE VALUE. PAKS NOW ESTIMATE THERE WILL BE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER NUMBER IN FIRST THREE CATEGORIES THAN ORIGINALLY EXPECTED, PERHAPS AS MANY AS 50,000. BOTH MFA AND ICRC HERE CLAIM THAT BDG HAS BACKLOG OF CLEARED CASES AWAITING TRANSPORTATION.

7. FOR FUTURE, ASSUMING BDG IS WILLING AND ABLE DELIVER MORE NON-BENGALEES, A BETTER RATIO OF APPLICANTS TO ACCEPTANCES AND ENTRY PERMITS TO PASSENGERS MAY BE EXPECTED. GOP NOVEMBER 1 PUBLIC STATEMENT ON REPATRIATION IDENTIFIED THE THREE CATEGORIES QUALIFYING FOR UNLIMITED ENTRY PERMITS AND ASKED ICRC TO BEGIN TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR QUOTE SPECIFIC GROUNDS OF HARDSHIP UNQUOTE (WITHOUT FURTHER DEFINITION). ACCORDING SADRUDDIN ICRC HAS NOT YET TAKEN THIS UP. (THERE IS SOME DANGER, OF COURSE, CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT THIS PROCESS COULD RESULT IN MASS APPLICATIONS FROM UNQUALIFIED PERSONS, WHICH WOULD ADD TO FRUSTRATION OF APPLICANTS AND REKINDLE BDG SUSPICIONS.)

8. ACTUAL ARRIVALS AS OF END OCTOBER WERE: 9,975 NON-BENGALEES TO PAKISTAN FROM BANGLADESH (PLUS 1,754 FROM NEPAL NOT COVERED BY AGREEMENT); 28,818 BENGALEES TO BANGLADESH; 16,137 POWS AND CIVILIAN INTERNEES TO PAKISTAN FROM INDIA. IN MOVEMENT OF THIS MAGNITUDE IT IS OBVIOUSLY DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN STRICT SIMULTANEITY (AND IN ANY EVENT GOP IS NOT WEDDED TO THE CONCEPT) BUT RESULTS TO DATE HAVE BEEN FAIRLY CLOSE. REPATRIATION OF BENGALEES HAS MOVED FASTEST BECAUSE IT STARTED EARLIER WITH BETTER PREPARATION AS RESULT GOP ARRANGEMENTS FOR REPATRIATION OF 15,000 AS UNILATERAL GESTURE BEFORE DELHI AGREEMENT.

9. BOTH BDG AND GOP HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT DELAY IN RETURN OF THEIR SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS AND MILITARY OFFICERS. AS REPORTED REF (A), GOP AND ICRC CLAIM ALL CLASS I BENGALEE CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE LEFT EXCEPT ON OR TWO WHO ARE IN PROCESS OF LEAVING (CONTRADICTING CHIB'S COMMENT IN TEHRAN AS REPORTED TEHRAN 8014). WHILE PAKS CLAIM MILITARY OFFICERS HERE HAVE ALSO MOVED EXPEDITIOUSLY, MARTIN (PROTECT) NOTES THAT SOME OFFICERS HAVE NOT MOVED WITH THEIR UNITS AND WONDERS WHETHER THIS MAY BE GOP ATTEMPT PRESSURE GOI FOR EARLY RETURN PAKISTANI SENIOR CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICERS STILL INTERNED. SATTAR, HOWEVER, EXPLAINED THAT SENIOR OFFICERS NOT REQUIRED MOVE WITH THEIR UNITS AND THAT UNITS DETAINED IN BARRACKS IN BALUCHISTAN AND NWFP ARE ONLY NOW BEING BROUGHT INTO CITIES FOR REPATRIATION PROCESSING.

10. RE GOP COMPLAINTS OF GOI DELAYS IN POW REPATRIATION, SATTAR SAID GOI HAD CLEARLY INDICATED IT WOULD NOT EXPEDITE MOVEMENT UNLESS TRANSFER OF NON-BENGALEES WERE SPEEDED UP. ALTHOUGH SLOW PACE OF NON-BENGALEE TRAVEL SEEMS TO HAVE RESULTED FROM PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS AND MISUNDERSTANDING RATHER THAN DESIGN, WE CAN HOPE THAT UNDERSTANDING REACHED BY SADRUDDIN (REF B) WILL RESULT IN FASTER MOVEMENT AND THAT GOI WILL STEP UP POW REPATRIATION (CHIB'S MENTION OF GOI OFFER TO RUN 2 TRAINS A DAY A HOPEFUL SIGN IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS DIRECTION).

11. GIVEN INCLINATION ON PART OF ALL THREE PARTIES SUSPECT ONE ANOTHER'S MOTIVES AND LACK OF CONTINUING FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION, SEEMS INEVITABLE MORE MISUNDERSTANDING WILL CROP UP WHICH WILL REQUIRE GOOD OFFICES OF ICRC, UNHCR AND PERHAPS OTHERS TO UNRAVEL. FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE GOP CLAIMS BENGALEES WILL CONTINUE TO BE MOVED OUT AS FAST AS TRANSPORT AVAILABLE AND SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY MID-JANUARY, NO UNLIKELY THAT FAILURE GOI TO INCREASE PACE POW RETURN COULD CAUSE GOP TO SLOW DOWN THIS PROCESS, LEADING TO FURTHER BICKERING. WHILE SADRUDDIN INDICATED THAT IMMEDIATE MISUNDERSTANDINGS HAD BEEN REMOVED AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT ROADBLOCKS TO SPEED-UP IN EXCHANGES HAD BEEN REMOVED, NO QUESTION THERE WILL BE FURTHER OBSTACLES TO REQUIRE HIS MINISTRATIONS. AT SAME TIME, FACT THAT ALL THREE GOVERNMENTS HAVE APPARENTLY COME TO CONCLUSION THAT CARRYING OUT THESE EXCHANGES IS IN THEIR INTEREST MAY INSURE THAT PROCESS, HOWEVER MUCH STRUNG OUT, WILL EVENTUALLY BE COMPLETED. SOBER

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